UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA Criminal No. 22-223 (NEB/DTS)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff.

v.

GOVERNMENT'S TRIAL BRIEF

- 11. ASAD MOHAMED ABSHIR, and
- 12. HAMDI HUSSEIN OMAR,

Defendants.

The United States of America, by and through its attorneys, Joseph H. Thompson, Acting United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota, Matthew S. Ebert, Harry M. Jacobs, and Daniel W. Bobier, Assistant United States Attorneys, respectfully submits the following trial brief in this matter.

I. OVERVIEW

On September 13, 2022, a grand jury returned a 61-count indictment charging 14 defendants—Aimee Bock, Abdikerm Eidleh, Salim Said, Abdulkadir Salah, Ahmed Omar-Hashim, Abdi Salah, Abdihakim Ahmed, Ahmed Artan, Abdikadir Mohamud, Abdinasir Abshir, Asad Mohamed Abshir, Hamdi Omar, Ahmed Ghedi, and Abdirahman Ahmed—with a number of crimes, including: conspiracy to commit wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 and 1343; wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343; conspiracy to commit federal programs bribery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 371 and 666; federal programs bribery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 666; conspiracy to commit concealment money laundering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1956(a) and (h); and money laundering, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1957.

In this trial, defendants Asad Abshir and Hamdi Omar are charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, wire fraud, and conspiracy to commit money laundering. Asad Abshir is additionally charged with money laundering.

The indictment alleges that Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their co-conspirators orchestrated and carried out a scheme that defrauded the Federal Child Nutrition Program, a government aid program designed to provide free meals to children in need. Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their co-conspirators exploited the Covid-19 pandemic to obtain, misappropriate, and launder tens of millions of dollars in program funds that were intended as reimbursements for the cost of serving meals and food to children. In all, the conspirators fraudulently misappropriated more than \$45 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

II. BACKGROUND

A. The Federal Child Nutrition Program

The Federal Child Nutrition Program is a government program that ensures children receive nutritious meals and snacks that adequately promote healthy physical and education development. The program is run through the Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA"). That agency administers Federal Child Nutrition Programs, which includes the Summer Food Service Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program (together, the "Federal Child Nutrition Program").

The Summer Food Service Program ("SFSP") is a federal program established to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. The Summer Food Service Program reimburses non-profit organizations and

other participating entities that serve free healthy meals and snacks to children and teens in low-income areas. The Child and Adult Care Food Program ("CACFP") is a federal program that reimburses non-profit organizations and other participating entities that serve healthy meals and snacks to children and adults at participating childcare centers, daycare homes, and after-school programs.

The Federal Child Nutrition Program operates throughout the United States. The USDA's Food and Nutrition Service administers the programs at the national and regional levels by distributing federal funds to state governments, which provide oversight for the Federal Child Nutrition Program. In Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Education ("MDE") administers the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

The Federal Child Nutrition Program operated through sponsors, which oversaw the sites. Sponsors, like Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition, are responsible for monitoring the operation of the programs and submitting reimbursement claims.

Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition were non-profit organizations purportedly in the business of helping community partners participate in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. Both were approved sponsors of the Federal Child Nutrition Program, and prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, each operated as a small non-profit that sponsored the participation of Minnesota daycares and after school programs in the Federal Child Nutrition Program.

Meals funded by the Federal Child Nutrition Program in Minnesota are served at "sites." Each site participating in the Federal Child Nutrition Program must be

sponsored by an organization authorized to participate in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. Sponsors are required to submit an application to MDE for each site. Sponsors are responsible for monitoring each of their sites and preparing reimbursement claims for their sites.

Sponsors submit reimbursement claims to MDE on behalf of sites under their sponsorship. The USDA provides federal reimbursement funds to MDE on a per-meal basis. MDE provides the federal funds to the sponsoring agency, which in turn pays the reimbursement funds to the sites under its sponsorship. The sponsoring agency retains ten to fifteen percent of the funds as an administrative fee in exchange for sponsoring the sites, submitting reimbursement claims, and disbursing the federal funds.

In exchange for sponsoring the sites' fraudulent participation in the program, sponsors received Federal Child Nutrition Program funds as administrative fees. In 2020 and 2021, Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition received tens of millions of dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds in administrative fees. Because the amount of administrative fees the sponsors received was based on the amount of federal funds received by sites under its sponsorship, Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition received tens of millions of dollars in administrative fees to which they were not entitled, due to its sponsorship and facilitation of fraudulent sites participating in the program.

B. The Covid-19 Waivers and Fraud

The Covid-19 pandemic, including various stay-at-home orders and distance learning, disrupted the operation of the Federal Child Nutrition Program. As a result, the USDA issued waivers to the program requirements, allowing additional flexibility for implementing the program and expanding the scope of the program. Following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting waivers, Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition sponsored an exponential number of new sites—more than 200 new Federal Child Nutrition Program sites.

Historically, the Federal Child Nutrition Program provided meals to children involved in education-based programs or activities. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the USDA waived several of the standard requirements for participation in the Federal Child Nutrition Program. Among other things, the USDA allowed for-profit restaurants to participate in the program. It also allowed for food distribution to children outside of educational programs. At the same time, the state government's stay-at-home order and telework policies made it more difficult to oversee the program. These changes left the program vulnerable to fraud and abuse.

Beginning in approximately April 2020—with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic—Feeding Our Future and Partners In Nutrition dramatically increased the number of sites under their sponsorship as well as the amount of Federal Child Nutrition Program funds received by those sites.

Feeding Our Future went from receiving and disbursing approximately \$3.4 million in federal funds to sites under its sponsorship in 2019 to nearly \$200 million

\$5.6 million in federal funds to sites under its sponsorship in 2019 to more than \$200 million in 2021. In 2021, sites under the sponsorship of Partners In Nutrition claimed to have served more than 80 million meals to children in Minnesota.

III. SCHEME TO DEFRAUD THE FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

A. Feeding Our Future

Co-conspirator Aimee Bock was the founder and executive director of Feeding Our Future, a non-profit organization in the business of helping community partners participate in the Federal Child Nutrition Program and related federal programs. Feeding Our Future was an approved sponsor of the Federal Child Nutrition Program. As a sponsor, Feeding Our Future was responsible for submitting site applications to MDE for approval, monitoring active sites, submitting claims for reimbursement from MDE, and disbursing federal funds to sites under its sponsorship. Feeding Our Future received payment from MDE and kept an administrative fee—typically 10 to 15 percent. Feeding Our Future provided the remaining funds directly to sites.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Bock and her company recruited individuals and entities to open more than 200 Federal Child Nutrition Program sites throughout the state of Minnesota. The sites fraudulently claimed to be serving meals to thousands of children a day within just days or weeks of being formed and despite having few, if any, staff and little to no experience serving this volume of meals.

The conspirators, including defendants Asad Abshir and Hamdi Omar, collectively claimed to be serving meals to tens of thousands of children each day

throughout the State of Minnesota, for which they fraudulently claimed and received millions of dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds. For example, coconspirators Salim Said and Abdulkadir Salah owned and operated Safari Restaurant. In April 2020, during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, Safari Restaurant enrolled in the Federal Child Nutrition Program under the sponsorship of Feeding Our Future. In all, the owners of Safari Restaurant claimed to have served more than 3.9 million meals to children between April 2020 and November 2021.

Safari Restaurant also operated as a vendor purporting to deliver food and meals to be served at other Federal Child Nutrition Program sites created by coconspirators throughout the state of Minnesota. Safari Restaurant claimed to have provided more than 2.2 million meals to other Federal Child Nutrition Program sites involved in the scheme. In all, as part of the scheme to defraud, Safari Restaurant received more than \$16 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds in 2020 and 2021. Said and Abdulkadir Salah sent much of this money to their co-conspirators via shell companies created and used to receive and launder the proceeds of the fraudulent scheme.

Co-conspirator Salim Said operated another site under the sponsorship of Feeding Our Future. Said was one of the creators of ASA Limited LLC in September 2020. Said, along with two partners (co-conspirators Abdihakim Ahmed and Ahmed Ghedi), was an equal one-third owner in the company. ASA Limited opened a federal child nutrition program site in St. Paul, Minnesota, under the sponsorship of Feeding Our Future at the Gurey Deli, a small market located in a

strip mall in St. Paul. Within just three weeks of creating the ASA Limited site, the co-conspirators fraudulently claimed to be serving meals to 2,000 or 3,000 children each day, seven days a week. Defendant Hamdi Omar was the owner of the Gurey Deli (where her co-conspirators had the fraudulent ASA Limited food site):

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State Minnesota Business Corporation Articles of Incorporation Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 302A	nu s
Read the instructions before completing this form.	
Filing Fee: \$155 for expedited service in-person and online filings, \$135 if submitted	by mail
Note: A professional firm governed under Chapter 319B must include an attachment with (This information is only required if this is a professional firm.) 1. Statement that the Minnesota firm elects to operate and acknowledges that it is subject to Chapter 319B.01 to 319B.12. 2. List the professional service the corporation is authorized to provide under Minnesota S.	to Minnesota Statutes,
The undersigned incorporator(s), in order to form a Minnesota Business Corporation Chapter 302A adopt the following:	under Minnesota Statutes,
Article I - Name of Corporation (Required)	
Gurey Deli Inc	
(The company name must include a corporate or professional designation in their name.)	
Article II - Registered Office and Agent (A Registered Office Address is Required)	
281 SOUTH MCKNIGHT RD STROUT	MN SSIIS
381 500th Mcknight RD St. Paul Street Address (A PO Box My Isself is not acceptable) City	State Zip Code
The Registered Agent at the above address is:	
The Registered Agent at the above address is:	
Article III – Shares The corporation is authorized to issue (Must authorize at least one share) total number of	f shares.
Article IV - Incorporators (Required)	
I, the undersigned, certify that I am signing this document as the person whose signature is	
person(s) whose signature would be required who has authorized me to sign this document capacities. I further certify that I have completed all required fields, and that the informati- correct and in compliance with the applicable chapter of Minnesota Statutes. I understand	on in this document is true and
I am subject to the penalties of perjury as set forth in Section 609.48 as if I had signed this	
Hamy: Omer USSA Woodhick of Woodbur	
Incorporator's Name Street Address City	State Zip Code
	1 1
	1119112

B. Stigma-Free International

By October 2020, MDE became concerned about the drastic increase in meal claims by sites under the sponsorship of Feeding Our Future. In response to MDE's well-founded concerns, Bock tried to cover up the fraud by diverting attention away from Feeding Our Future and the scheme by blaming MDE when it attempted to perform legitimate oversight. MDE regularly raised questions about the number of sites and amount of meal claims being submitted by Feeding Our Future on behalf of

sites under its sponsorship. Bock knew that MDE's concerns were valid, and that little of the Federal Child Nutrition Program funds disbursed by Feeding Our Future were used to feed children. Bock also knew that if MDE discovered the true nature of the fraud, the flow of federal funds to Feeding Our Future and sites under its sponsorship would stop.

Due to these concerns, MDE announced that the Federal Child Nutrition Program no longer allowed restaurants and other for-profit companies to enroll as sites. MDE explained that restaurants would only be allowed to participate as meal vendors providing food. MDE further announced that any restaurants enrolled as distribution sites would be closed as of October 31, 2020.

Shortly after MDE disallowed for-profit restaurants, some of the conspirators of Hamdi Omar and Asad Abshir, including Ahmed Artan, obtained a non-profit entity, Stigma-Free International, for use in carrying out the fraud. They immediately used their new non-profit to open a number of new Federal Child Nutrition Program sites. Other co-conspirators created additional shell companies to serve as for-profit meal vendor companies purporting to provide the meals to be served to children at these sites. Together, the defendants claimed to be serving meals to tens of thousands of children each day throughout the state of Minnesota, for which they fraudulently claimed and received millions of dollars in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

C. Mankato and Waite Park: Asad Abshir and Hamdi Omar's Fraudulent Sites

In October 2020, Asad Abshir opened up one of these fraudulent Stigma-Free sites in Mankato along with one of his co-conspirators, his brother Abdinasir Abshir. Their Stigma-Free Mankato site purported to serve meals to 3,000 children a day, seven days a week. Asad Abshir claimed to be operating the Stigma-Free Mankato site out of J's Sambusa, a small restaurant in North Mankato.



The Abshirs also created a shell company called Horseed Management that purported to serve as a meal vendor providing meals to be served at the site. During the one-year period from November 2020 to November 2021, Asad Abshir and his coconspirators claimed to have served more than 1.6 million meals at the Stigma-Free Mankato site, claims which were based upon fraudulent meal count sheets, attendance rosters, and invoices. Based on these fraudulent claims, the coconspirators received approximately \$5 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds.

Like her co-defendant, Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar also opened up one of these Stigma-Free sites. Hamdi Omar's site—which operated out of the Green Market, a small market and grocery store located in a strip mall in Waite Park, Minnesota—fraudulently claimed to serve 2,000 children a day, seven days a week.



Hamdi Omar signed and submitted many of the fraudulent meal counts for the Stigma Free Waite Park site.

	AFTERSCHO	OOL I	ME	AL CO	נו מוכ	5 – CL	ICK	- K		
Sponsor	FEEDING OUR FUTURE	Email	aimee@feedingourfuturemn.org					Phone	612.345.4922	
Site	STIGMA FREE -WATE PARK	Superv	isor H	HAMDI OMAR			Week of	09/19/2021		
Meal Type	SNACK		SUPPER							
Available Meals			Sunda	y Mondaý	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
Number of meals received/prepared			2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	
Number of meals from yesterday			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Meal Counts			Sunda	ay Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
Number of firsts served to children			2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	2057	
Number of second meals served to children (not reimbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	. 0	0	
Number of meals served to program adults (not reimbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of meals served to non-program adults (not reimbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of children requesting meals of food is gone			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Food			Sunda	lay Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursda	y Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
FOOD TEMPERATURE									-	
Number of non-reimbursable, incomplete or damaged meals			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of leftover meals			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Initials of person taking daily meal count certifying that the information is true and accurate			но	НО	но	но	но	но	но	

From: hamdi omar <feedingouryouth@gmail.com>
To: Stigmafreemn1@gmail.com, Salimsaid4040@gmail.com
Subject: oct
Date: Wed, 03 Nov 2021 19:16:04 -0500
Attachments: waite_park_catering_invoice_OCTOBER_(2)_(1).pdf; waite_park_meal_count_Oct.pdf;
Stigmafree_Waite_Park_Oct_Attendence.pdf

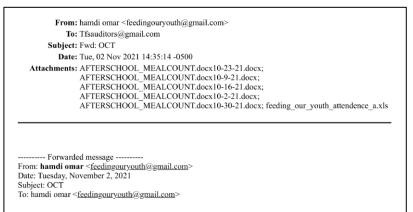
	AFTERSCHO	OL I	MEA	AL CO	UNT	S – Cl	_ICK	ER		
Sponsor	FEEDING OUR FUTURE	Email	aimee@feedingourfuturemn.org					Phone	612.345.4922	
Site	STIAMA FREE - WAITE PARK	Supervis	visor Hamali Mar			V	Week of	10/3	3 21	
Meal Type	SNACK			11.41		SUPPER				
Available Meals			Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
Number of meals received/prepared			3158	2158	2158	988	BIS8	9128	968	
Number of meals from yesterday			0	6	0	0	0	0	0	
Meal Counts			Friday	Saturday	Friday	Saturday	Friday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
Number of firsts served to children			158	2158	a152	2158	7150	2158	3158	
Number of second meals served to children (not reimbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of meals served to program adults (not reinbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Number of meals served to non-program adults (not reimbursed)			0	0	0	0	0	8	0	
Number of children requesting meals of food is gone			0	0	0	0	0	0	10	
Food			Friday	Saturday	Friday	Saturday	Friday	Friday	Saturday	TOTAL
FOOD TEMPERATURE			-	_	-	_	_	0	0	-
Number of non-reimbursable, incomplete or damaged meals			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
Number of leftover meals			0	0	0	0	0	10		-
Initials of person taking daily meal count certifying that the information is true and accurate SITE SUPERVISOR: By signing, I c			40	HO	Ho	HO	HO	1	HO	

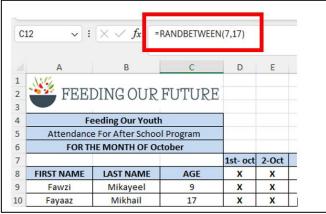
Similar to the Abshirs' company, "Horseed Management," the conspirators created a company called "Feeding Our Youth" that purported to serve as a meal vendor for Hamdi Omar's fraudulent Stigma-Free Waite Park site. Between April and November 2021, Hamdi Omar and her co-conspirators claimed to have served more than 500,000 meals at the Stigma-Free Waite Park site with Feeding Our Youth as the fraudulent vendor. Based on these claims, the co-conspirators received more than \$1 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program reimbursements.

1. Fake Meal Counts and Rosters

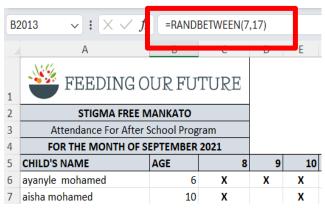
The trial evidence will reveal that Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their conspirators used and submitted sham meal count sheets and phony attendance rosters purporting to list the names of children who received meals at their sites. But these lists did not contain the names of real children. Indeed, school district records

and trial testimony will establish that the vast majority of the falsified names on these rosters appear nowhere in the official school district enrollment records of multiple school districts where the defendants professed to serve millions of meals. Some of the roster spreadsheets submitted for the defendants' sites sent even contained an imbedded formula that inserted a random number between 7 and 17 in the age column of the spreadsheet.









One of the fake rosters submitted in support of a fraudulent claim for Asad Abshir's Stigma-Free Mankato site purported to list the names and ages of approximately 2,032 children who attended and received meals at their "after school"

program" in Mankato. However, almost none of the names on the roster matched the names of students who attended school in the Mankato Area Public School district.

In support of their fraudulent claims, Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their coconspirators also used and submitted fraudulent invoices purporting to show their purchase of food to feed children.

D. The Money Laundering

In all, the defendants received more than \$47 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds between April 2020 through January 2022. These federal funds were received by the defendants' companies from Feeding Our Future.

Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their co-conspirators created and used an array of entities and shell companies to receive, launder, and distribute their fraudulent proceeds. Some of these companies purported to be meal vendors providing meals and food to program sites, but in reality, the companies were shells created to disguise the source and ownership of the fraud proceeds. The defendants transferred millions of dollars between their shell companies to conceal the source of the funds, and then used the shell companies to purchase millions of dollars' worth of real estate, cars, and fund their lifestyles and personal spending.

1. The "Vendor" Companies

Asad Abshir, Hamdi Omar, and their co-conspirators used "vendor" companies—ostensibly in the business of providing food for distribution—to launder their fraudulent proceeds. In reality, the vendor companies provided only a fraction of the food that their sites claimed to be serving and acted a source to conceal the source of the fraud proceeds.

As the financial records will establish, Stigma-Free and its various related entities, in turn, paid the bulk of these funds over to the vendor companies, purportedly to pay for food distribution at its various sites. Instead, the defendants used the vendor companies to receive and launder the Federal Child Nutrition Program funds while concealing the money as payments for the purchase of food.

Hamdi Omar created a company called Feeding Our Youth LLC, ostensibly to run the Stigma-Free Waite Park site. Feeding Our Youth purported to be a food vendor company that provided food and meals to be served at the Stigma-Free Waite Park site. In reality, she used Feeding Our Youth as a shell company designed to obtain and launder fraud proceeds. In all, she deposited more than \$1 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds into Feeding Our Youth bank accounts.

Similarly, Asad Abshir, together with his brother and co-conspirator, Abdinasir Abshir, created Horseed Management LLC to carry out the fraudulent scheme. Horseed Management purported to be a food vendor company that provided food and meals to be served at the Stigma-Free Mankato site. In reality, the Abshirs used Horseed Management as a shell company to obtain and launder fraud proceeds. In all, Asad Abshir and his brother deposited more than \$5 million in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds into Horseed Management bank accounts.

2. The Shell Companies

The defendants also created and used an array of other companies to conceal and launder their fraud proceeds. For her part, in September 2020, Hamdi Omar registered Omar Management Corporation, which she used as a shell company to receive and launder her cut of the fraud proceeds. For his part, in January 2021,

Asad Abshir registered Santana LLC, a shell company he similarly used to receive and launder fraud proceeds. In 2021, Asad Abshir deposited more than \$750,000 in Federal Child Nutrition Program funds into Santana LLC bank accounts. He used this money to, among other things, pay for personal spending, international travel, and to purchase a 2022 GMC Sierra 1500 pickup truck for approximately \$78,000.

IV. POTENTIAL LEGAL AND EVIDENTIARY ISSUES

A. Summary Testimony and Charts

The United States intends to call law enforcement agents to testify as summary witnesses in its case-in-chief. "The testimony of a summary witness may be received so long as she bases her summary on evidence received in the case and is available for cross-examination." *United States v. Ellefsen*, 655 F.3d 769, 780 (8th Cir. 2011) (quoting *United States v. King*, 616 F.2d 1034, 1041 (8th Cir. 1980)).

In addition, because this case involves voluminous documentary evidence, including school enrollment records, bank records, and other financial documents, the government intends to offer summary charts into evidence in order to assist the jury. Summary charts are properly admitted when (1) the charts fairly summarize voluminous trial evidence, (2) they assist the jury in understanding testimony already introduced, and (3) the witness who prepared the charts is subject to cross-examination with all documents used to prepare the summary. *United States v. Spires*, 628 F.3d 1049, 1052-53 (8th Cir. 2011) (citing Fed. R. Evid. 1006). "Also, summaries may include assumptions and conclusions so long as they are based upon evidence in the record." *Id.* at 1053.

B. Stipulations and Self-Authentication Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 902

The parties have discussed foundational stipulations with respect to certain business records that will obviate the need to call custodians of records as witnesses at trial. While the parties are still working through the details of these stipulations, the government is hopeful that the parties will be able to put this stipulation on the record at the pretrial conference.

With respect to any business records for which the defendants are unwilling to stipulate with respect to foundation, the government has and will be providing notice to defense counsel of its intent to offer these business records pursuant to the self-authentication provisions of Federal Rules of Evidence 803(6) and 902(11). The records have and will be identified with particularity to the defense in the government's Federal Rule of Evidence 902 notices, and they have all previously been provided to the defense in the government's Rule 16 disclosures. Certifications for these records have also been made available for the defendant's review. The government will also seek to admit certain public records pursuant to the self-authentication provisions of Federal Rules of Evidence 803(8) and 902(1), (2), and (4).

Dated: July 14, 2025 Respectfully Submitted,

JOSEPH H. THOMPSON Acting United States Attorney

<u>/s/ Matthew S. Ebert</u>

BY:

MATTHEW S. EBERT HARRY M. JACOBS DANIEL W. BOBIER Assistant United States Attorneys